

CHARLIE MELANCON
3RD DISTRICT, LOUISIANA

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY
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COMMITTEE ON
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Congress of the United States
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June 29, 2010

The Honorable W. Craig Fugate
Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
500 C Street SW
Washington, DC 20472

Admiral Thad Allen
National Incident Commander
U.S. Coast Guard
2100 2nd St SW
Stop 7101
Washington, DC 20593

Dear Administrator Fugate, Admiral Allen:

As you know, more than 4 million barrels of oil have polluted the Gulf of Mexico as a result of the BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill. In the midst of hurricane season, I, along with countless Gulf Coast families, fear that the collision of a tropical storm or hurricane and the oil slick will create a disaster of unprecedented proportion. Scientists' predictions that the presence of oil may increase the severity of storms, coupled with Tropical Storm Alex picking up intensity in the southern Gulf, has our state and our region preparing for the worst possible situation.

The additional environmental damage and health hazards caused by oil-contaminated flood water could be devastating to our region. Gulf Coast residents are counting on the Coast Guard, as the federal government lead on oil spill response, and FEMA, as the primary agency charged with disaster response and management, to be prepared for this scenario. In light of the risks caused by a potential storm, I ask that the Coast Guard provide information on the effects that severe weather may have on containment efforts, as well as how the Coast Guard is planning to respond to this situation. In addition, I ask that FEMA disclose what procedures it has in place to manage such an emergency, as well as how the agency is planning to use its mission-assignment authority under a Stafford Act disaster declaration to address the environmental and health effects of an oil-contaminated flood.

The oil spill has already cost too many Louisiana families their jobs, and now, the possibility of a hurricane poses an increased threat to their livelihoods, health, and homes. I urge you to do everything in your power to mitigate the harm of a potential storm. I appreciate your urgent attention to this matter.

Many thanks,

Charlie Melancon
Member of Congress